

The Washington Post

“Mr. Lamari would be a compelling candidate if he were not so opposed to growth.”

– The Washington Post

That quote says it all. I am not the “Developer’s Candidate”, nor am I the “Union Candidate”, which is why I’m not being endorsed by The Washington Post.

I wish to set the record straight. It isn’t about being opposed to growth, and growth is not something that I am opposed to. However, I *am* supportive of measurable growth policies that make developers pay their fair share, rather than leaving that burden to the taxpayer.

We are in the grip of a major fiscal crisis. Yes, it was brought upon us by a national downturn of the economy. However, we would have been in a better situation had we not allowed Montgomery County to grow beyond its ability to sustain that growth. We allowed this to go on throughout the Duncan years without receiving the necessary funds from developers to pay for the needed infrastructure, county employees, and other county services.

Let’s analyze the situation: Looking at Rockville Pike, there has been unprecedented new development all along the corridor. Rockville has built a lovely town-center and tens of thousands of units were built going down to King Farms. Also, the Shady Grove transit station has another 6,000 residential units proposed. Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman of the Park and Planning Commission, is proposing that the White Flint Mater Plan increase development several times over, going from 2,200 existing residential units to well over 17,400. His plan also involves increasing commercial development from 2 million square feet to well over 5 million. I feel that this is course of action is excessive for an area which is already experiencing severe congestion.

Mr. Hanson doesn’t stop there, either. He believes that White Flint should be the model of future growth in Montgomery County, and has proposed bringing Germantown’s density up to 15,000 residential development units. Additionally, the Gaithersburg West Master Plan that he proposes would increase residential units an additional 5,000 and add 9 million square feet of commercial area, bringing that master plan to 20 million square feet of commercial space. Mr. Hanson also proposes the White Flint Model for White Oak, which would increase density many times over.

I want to reiterate that my position isn’t a matter of opposing growth, but a matter of scale. It’s a matter of paying the bill for this new growth, and catching up with the existing demands on infrastructure and demands, which includes our workforce. As I have repeatedly said throughout this election, every new unit built has a cost of over \$36,000 for associated infrastructure and services, and we collect less than \$8,000 of this at our transit centers. This is why we have a shortage of teachers, policeman, firefighters and apparatus, D.O.T. workers, and the infrastructure to support all of our existing growth.

We also lack a stable funding source for our county employees, as we cannot rely on property taxes alone to pay for basic services. We currently rely on nuisance taxes, as well. These include measures like increasing transfer taxes and recordation fees, capitol gain revenues, and other taxes on businesses, which for the most part have dried up. This has led to the loss of over 400

county employees and the reduction of much-needed county services.

We can't get out of the crisis that we find ourselves in by digging a deeper hole. It will take courage not to yield to special interests while we catch up on our infrastructural demands. We can only grow responsibly by requiring developers to pay their fair share. The problem is that this isn't a popular idea in the business community. Perhaps this is why the Chamber of Commerce did not endorse me?

I believe that District 4 has some incredible natural resources, and a valuable quality of life that we should strive to protect. If elected, I will protect the suburban and semi-rural lifestyle that we currently enjoy, increase jobs in order to provide options to the residential community, and to complete the work of Marilyn Praisner by building a low-density Town Center in the heart of Burtonsville. I believe that the Voters, and not the Special Interest Groups, should have the final say in how we live life in Montgomery County. It's time for change, but let's not allow Special Interests to change Montgomery County into something that we're not.

Cary Lamari